

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are pending.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 6-9 are allowed.

Claims 1-3 and 5 are rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Yamamoto, U.S. Patent 6,381,428. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

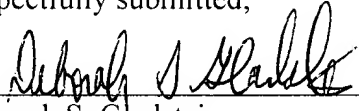
Applicants respectfully submit that Yamamoto is not a valid reference under 35 USC 102(e). The filing date of Yamamoto is August 24, 2000. The foreign priority dates claimed in this application are January 4, 2001 and February 18, 2000, the latter of which is before the publication date of the cited reference. Applicants hereby submit a verified translation of the Japanese Application No. 2000-41936 filed February 18, 2000, to perfect the claim for foreign priority. Applicants submit that Japanese Application No. 2000-41936 (filed February 18, 2000) provides support for the features of claims 1-3 and 5. Thus, Applicants request that this rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, Applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 325772022400.

Dated: August 22, 2005

Respectfully submitted,

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